GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2311
ANSWERED ON:18.03.2002
MAIZE CULTIVATION
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Maize is under-rated by the Government in relation to Rice and Wheat,despite it being grown over 6.3 lakh/hectare yielding an annual crop of 11.5 million tonnes;

(b) whether Maize is being used as Cattle-poultry feed;

(c) if so, the steps being taken to promote Maize for human consumption by value addition;

(d) whether Maize yields in India are low at 1.76 tonne/hectare as compared to 8.4 tonne/hectare in US; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken to propogate genetically improved seeds for Maize cultivation?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a): No, Sir. Maize crop has been imparted the appropriate thrust by Government of India, both in terms of research and development under National Agricultural System by elevating the `Coordinated Research Project` to the Directorate of Maize Research (DMR) and implementing an independent centrally sponsored scheme entitled `Accelerated Maize Development Programme (AMDP)` in which a multi-pronged approach with emphasis on research and development, post harvest technology, supply of inputs and transfer of technology, etc. has been adopted.

During 2000-2001, maize crop was grown over an area of 6.56 million hectares with a production of 12.07 million tonnes and a productivity level of 1.84 tonnes/hectare.

(b): Yes, Sir.

(c): Maize is primarily used for human consumption. It is estimated that 45-48% of maize produced in the country is used as food.

Maize has over 3500 uses. Many value-added products are being derived from maize viz; various types of Starches, Glucose, High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS), Sorbitol, Corn Oil, Dextrose, Corn Sugar & Lactic acid etc.

Under the ICAR Research system, a new variety, viz; Quality Protein Maize (QPM) with better protein quality and a higher yield potential than normal maize hybrids has been developed and released for commercial cultivation. In addition to QPM, other varieties like sweet corn, pop corn, baby corn etc. have also been developed.

(d): Average yield of maize in our country was 1.84 tonnes/hectare during 2000- 2001.

It is a fact that our average yield level is much lower as compared to that in US. However, this is because the crop in US is grown under temperate conditions over large lands whereas majority of our crop is grown as a kharif crop in small and marginal lands, by resource poor small & marginal farmers and highly dependent upon the vagaries of monsoons. Further, kharif crop also encounters several biotic and abiotic factors. However, under ideal conditions, productivity level of our winter crop (Rabi Maize), where the crop is grown under temperate condition, is comparable to that in US. Similarly, our kharif maize yield also compares well with that of other tropical countries.

(e): To harness maximum yield advantage, emphasis has been laid on the development of nutritionally superior high yielding hybrids, specially single cross hybrids by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)/Directorate of Maize Research (DMR). Efforts are being made for gradually shifting area under the composites/local varieties to hybrids with emphasis on two parent hybrids in early maturing materials and single cross hybrids in case of full and medium maturity materials.

Genetically modified varieties of maize are at present being tested under controlled conditions.